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ence of the apocryphal literature of the East, which was saturated with oriental tradition, was becoming all-pervasive.¹⁸ One fact, however, is plain; the presence in a story from Italy of the eleventh century, of the magnificent palace within a hill, the narrow path, the dreadful river, the active bridge, the monster guard, the storm-making spring, features, moreover, which occur separately in more than one tale from classical and oriental sources, renders entirely unnecessary any appeal to "the crucible of Celtic fancy" to explain the presence of these same details, either separately or in combination, in French or English story posterior by many years to the monk's tale preserved by William of Malmesbury.

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SCHILLER AND THE GENESIS OF ROMANTICISM

PART II

Friedrich Schlegel himself bore clear and emphatic testimony to the decisive impression produced upon him by his first reading of the second instalment of Schiller's *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*. In a letter to A. W. Schlegel, January 15, 1796, he writes:

"Dann hat mich Schiller's Theorie des Sentimentalen so beschäftigt, dass ich einige Tage nichts andres gethan habe, als sie lesen und Anmerkungen schreiben. . . . Schiller hat mir wirklich Aufschlüsse gegeben. Wenn mir innerlich so etwas kocht, so bin ich unfähig etwas andres ruhig vorzunehmen. Der Entschluss,

¹⁸ Cf. Günter, *Die christliche Legende des Abendlandes*, Heidelberg, 1910, pp. 139-140, 149. From this source, it would seem, comes the active bridge of glass in the *Voyage of Maelduin*; cf. Patch, *l. c.*, p. 636. In regard to the example of the active bridge quoted from the *Tochmarc Emere*, it may be noted that in the earliest version of this story in the *Leabhar na h'Uidre* the episode is wanting, nor does it follow that, because the version in the Stowe ms. of the 14th cen., which does contain the episode, agrees with that in the former as far as it goes, the incident of the bridge had a place in the earlier version; for it is lacking, also, in the version contained in the Rawlinson, B. 512, vellum ms., which, according to Hyde, *The Literary History of Ireland*, p. 296, represents the oldest recension founded on a pro-Danish text.

noch diesen Winter eine Skizze meiner Poetik für den Druck auszuarbeiten, ist nun fest genommen."¹

The effect of this reading was apparent in the preface which Friedrich soon after wrote for the collection of his essays on Greek poetry, then in press. His indebtedness to Schiller's essay is now publicly acknowledged; it has given him "a broader insight into the nature of *die interessante Poesie* and thrown a new light upon the limitations of the scope of classical poetry."² If he had read it earlier, his account of the origin and character of modern poetry, in his present book, would have been "incomparably less incomplete." He adopts, in fact, in his preface an unmistakably apologetic tone with respect to the (earlier-written) essays which the volume contains. He begs his readers not to take his strictures upon the moderns as his final judgment on the subject. He would now, he suggests, have his arguments construed merely as hypothetical. If the "pure laws of beauty and of art" are to determine our aesthetic standards, if "objectivity" is a requisite to aesthetic value, *then* modern poetry must be condemned, since it does not even aim at conformity to these standards, but finds its ideal in "das Interessante d. h. subjektive aesthetische Kraft." But if there are other criteria of genuine aesthetic worth, then, precisely by pointing out this characteristic of modern poetry, Schlegel has — as he significantly intimates — prepared the way for nothing less than "eine sehr glänzende Rechtfertigung der Modernen."

He is not, indeed, even yet willing to repudiate completely his former idols. It is only a "provisional validity" that he can concede to "das Interessante in der Poesie." Doubtless the perfection of form of ancient poetry was due to the limitations of its

¹ *Briefe an seinen Bruder*, 253; italics mine. A little later (Feb., 1796) Schlegel writes that, in essentials, he is also fully in agreement with Schiller's "Erklärung und Herleitung des elegischen Dichters"—i. e., with the fourth part of the essay (*ibid.*, 263).

² Schlegel here adopts *sentimental* as antithetic to *objektive Poesie*, and as equivalent to an important part, though not the whole, of what he had hitherto signified by *interessant*. His definition of the first of these terms is: "eine poetische Aeusserung des Strebens nach dem Unendlichen, die mit einer Reflexion über das Verhältniss des Idealen und des Realen verknüpft ist." (*Jugendschriften*, I, 81.) It should be noted that Schlegel expressly uses "sentimental" as interchangeable with Schiller's "sentimentalisch."

content; doubtless it is the destiny of modern poetry to transcend these limitations, and in doing so to pass through many stages in which "pure beauty" is subordinated to the progressive enrichment of the content and material of the art. Thus, during all these stages, it must be admitted "dass das Interessante, als die nothwendige Vorbereitung zur unendlichen Perfektibilität der ästhetischen Anlage, ästhetisch erlaubt sei." But the goal is still a complete conformity to "the laws of an objective theory" of the beautiful and to "the example of classical poetry." Yet, as Enders has remarked,³ this reservation is rather nominal than real; for since the goal is confessedly unattainable, capable only of being endlessly approached, and the *Interessant* is meanwhile to be the standard of poetic excellence, it is with the latter alone that either poet or critic can ever be actually concerned.

It is precisely the transitional character of this preface of 1797, and the express acknowledgment which it contains that the transition then in process in Schlegel's opinions was due to Schiller, which constitute the most decisive evidence that the essay *On Naive and Sentimental Poetry* was the chief instrument of the conversion of Schlegel to his new—that is, to his Romantic—aesthetic faith. A little later, in the *Lyceumsfragmente* (1797), we find the transition completed. Schlegel now unsparingly ridicules his own earlier *Objektivitätswut*, affirms the superiority of "the modern" on grounds similar to those which had been set forth by Schiller,⁴ and promulgates some of the most characteristic articles of the Romantic creed.

It is not difficult to see what it was in Schiller's essay that produced so great an effect upon the younger man's mind, and furnished him at once with new "solutions." For the essay—especially the second part—was, in the first place, addressed directly to the problem which had been Schlegel's absorbing preoccupation from the beginning of his career as critic and aesthetic

³ *Friedrich Schlegel*, 1913, p. 263.

⁴ *Fgm.* 93: "In den Alten sieht man den vollendeten Buchstaben der ganzen Poesie; in den Neuern ahnet man den werdenden Geist;" 91: "Die Alten sind nicht ein willkürlich auserwähltes Kunstvolk Gottes; noch haben sie den alleinseligmachenden Schönheitsglauben." Cf. also 107.—The typically 'Romantic' of the *Lyceumsfragmente* are, besides these, Nos. 7, 16, 20, 34, 42, 48, 60, 64, 82, 87, 95, 104, 108, 115. No. 84 perhaps represents rather the transitional position of the above-mentioned *Vorrede*.

theorist; it was an attempt to define the immanent *ideas* of ancient and of modern poetry, to formulate the *moralische Bedeutung* (in Schiller's phrase) of both. And some of the essentials of the formulation were the same as those which Schlegel had already reached through his own reflection. That the modern man is no longer "in unity with Nature"; that the modern poet, in contrast with the ancient, is characteristically "subjective," disposed to be interested rather "in the impression which objects make upon him than in the objects themselves"; that the "ancient poet moves us through Nature, through the truth of sense, through a present and living reality, while the modern poet moves us through ideas"; that, most characteristically of all, modern art is a *Kunst des Unendlichen* while ancient art is a *Kunst der Begrenzung*—these were themes upon which Schlegel himself had copiously discoursed. What gave Schiller's essay its revolutionary significance for him was that it found in these traits of modern art the evidence, not of degeneracy, but of "an infinite superiority in kind" to the spirit and aims of ancient art; that it recognized the "path followed by modern poets" as one necessarily followed by mankind everywhere, in the case both of the race and of the individual—in other words, as a normal stage in the evolution of art; that it roundly condemned the practise (so characteristic of Schlegel's earlier aesthetic writings) of "first drawing a one-sided conception of the generic nature of poetry from the ancients and then depreciating the moderns by contrasting them with this conception"; and that it clearly implied that there could be no "objective" aesthetic principles, in one of the senses in which the term had been hitherto used by both Schlegel and Schiller—no standards and no models which could be set up as complete, final, "necessary," immutable, and of "universal validity"—since the attempt to limit the artist by such standards would be an attempt to arrest that ceaseless "progression" which is the distinctive vocation and the glory of modern art.

What Schiller did for Schlegel, it will be seen, was not so much to suggest to him new arguments as to give him, by example, the courage to follow through, even to a revolutionary conclusion, an argument which had already been suggested to him by an analogy from the ethics of Kant and the metaphysics of Fichte.⁵ That

⁵ See Part I of this study, *MLN.*, xxxv, pp. 1 ff.

conclusion consisted in the thesis which may be defined as the generating and generic element in the Romantic doctrine—the thesis, namely of the intrinsic superiority of a *Kunst des Unendlichen* over a *Kunst der Begrenzung*, and of the consequently higher rank of modern, i. e., of “progressive” and “subjective,” art, in comparison with the static and more purely “objective” art of classical antiquity, with its cramping perfection of form and its rigorous self-limitation. In the sense that he brought Fr. Schlegel to this fundamental Romantic conviction, Schiller may be described as the spiritual grandfather of German Romanticism.

Schlegel's later formal definitions of “the Romantic” show abundantly that that notion had the same generic (though not the same specific) essence as Schiller's conception of “sentimental poetry,” of an “art of infinity” which is the true expression of the modern spirit. Thus Schlegel writes in 1800: “Nach meiner Ansicht und meinem Sprachgebrauch ist eben das romantisch, was uns einen sentimental Stoff in einer fantastischen Form darstellt.” He goes on to explain that he uses the word “sentimental,” not in its vulgar sense, but to designate that which is characterized by the “spirit of love”; and that by “love,” in turn, he means more than an emotional interest in individuals, which is but a “Hindeutung auf das Höhere, Unendliche, Hieroglyphe der unendlichen Liebe und der heiligen Lebensfülle der bildenden Natur.” So, elsewhere in the same writing, Schlegel speaks of “that broader sense of the word romantic” in which it signifies “die Tendenz nach einem tiefen unendlichen Sinn.”⁶ Yet it would be profoundly false to represent Schiller's conception of “sentimentalische Dichtung” as equivalent to Schlegel's idea of “romantische Poesie.” So far from identical are they, that in certain respects the Romantic poet à la Schlegel corresponds rather to Schiller's “natural (*naive*) poet.” This fact is at once apparent from the examples given by Schiller. Homer, indeed, is for him a “natural” poet; but so are certain great moderns—Shakespeare, Molière, Goethe. For Schlegel, on the other hand, as I have already pointed out, Shakespeare

⁶ *Jugendschriften*, II, 370-372, 364. Cf. the passage in which Novalis in January, 1798, predicts the coming of a “höhere,” an “erweiterte Poesie, die man könnte die Poesie des Unendlichen nennen.” Here, too, the formula is Schiller's; but it is also the formula for “the Romantic.”

was "the very centre and core of romantic poetry."⁷ So conspicuous a difference in the classification of individual poets points to some significant divergence between the two notions "sentimentalisch" and "romantisch."

The point of divergence can be fairly precisely determined. The two writers agree in regarding the excellence of modern poetry as consisting in the "infinity" of its "content" (*Gehalt*), in its dedication to the quest of a never fully realizable ideal, in its unceasing *Annäherung zu einer unendlichen Grösse*. But it is not at all of the same "infinity" that Schiller and Schlegel are thinking; and the "endless progression" which one of them desiderates is a progression in a different respect, and in a different direction, from that to which the other would have modern art aspire. For the vague and ambiguous notion of a "striving after an infinite content," in art or in life, which, as I have said, was common to Schiller and to the Romanticists in general, was capable of at least five distinct, though not in all cases mutually exclusive, interpretations. It might be taken in an ethical, or in a quasi-mystical, or in a hedonic sense, or (there seems to be no adjective for this) in the sense of striving for striving's sake, or in what may be called a realistic sense, that of an endeavor after richness and variety in the representation of reality. In other words, the poet might (1) find the inspiration of his art in some moral ideal, or moral passion, too lofty or too many-sided or too exacting ever to be fully realized or worthily expressed; or (2) his art might manifest a *Streben nach dem Unendlichen* in the sense of a preference for the mysterious or the vague or the remote, or of a yearning after some consummation of which the allurements lay in its indefinability and its transcendence of all ordinary experience; or (3) he might be temperamentally characterized by an insatiable craving for ever new emotions or enjoyments or possessions (like Carlyle's "infinite bootblack") and might devote his art to the exhibition of this peculiarity of his own; or (4) he might set up *insatiability as such* as a conscious ideal, and make the glorification of this ideal the theme of his art (as in *Faust*); or (5) he might conceive it to be the function of art to express with ever increasing but never complete adequacy the infinite variety and inexhaustible interestingness

⁷ See *MLN.*, xxxii (February, 1917), pp. 69-72, on the attitude of early German Romanticism towards Shakespeare.

of "life"—i. e., of the aspects of nature and the phases of human experience, especially of inner experience. This equivocality of its fundamental notion of "infinity" is the principal reason why the Romantic doctrine developed into such various and incongruous forms, and why the term "Romantic" has come to have so confusing a diversity of connotations.

Now, the "infinite striving" of Schiller's "sentimental poet" was chiefly of the first of these five sorts; it was a striving for the fuller realization or the more adequate and worthy expression of a moral ideal. His dissatisfaction arising from the "contrast between the ideal and reality," for example, is not a mere sense of the failure of the world to satisfy our desires; it is "ein tiefes Gefühl moralischer Widersprüche, ein glühender Unwillen gegen moralische Verkehrtheit."⁸ The poet who expresses the true ideal of modern art will not care to portray "*actual* human nature" but only "*true* human nature," i. e., humanity in which the higher and distinctively human faculty of the self-active Reason is dominant.⁹ True, the satiric poet must necessarily put before us the imperfections or absurdities of humanity; but he does so in order the better to express the ideal through contrast, and through the scorn or the indignation which he must always feel, and make his reader feel, for the baseness or pettiness or irrationality, in individual character or social customs, which he describes. The poet's aim must always be to elevate as well as entertain his reader, *Veredlung* as well as *Erholung*. In short, the aesthetic doctrine of the essay *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* is of a highly moralistic sort.¹⁰

Quite other was Fr. Schlegel's interpretation of the "infinite striving" which he too looked upon as the characteristic of modern art.

⁸ Schiller's reference here is specifically to the satiric poet, who is (when he conforms to these requirements) one of the two principal species of "sentimental" poet.

⁹ "Wirkliche Natur ist jeder noch so gemeine Ausbruch der Leidenschaft, er mag auch wahre Natur sein, aber eine wahre *menschliche* ist er nicht: denn diese erfordert einen Antheil des selbstständigen Vermögens an jeder Aeusserung, dessen Ausdruck jedesmal Würde ist." *Über naive, usw.*, Pt. 5.

¹⁰ This is true at least of the main drift and emphasis of Schiller's argument. He occasionally, however, lapses into a somewhat different conception of "sentimentalisch," apparently without being himself aware of the difference. When, for example, he speaks of Werther—not the novel, but the character which Goethe chose in that novel to portray—as an illustra-

In the author whose own first contribution to Romantic literature was to be *Lucinde*, that striving by no means aimed at the "infinity" of an ideal of moral perfection too sublime and austere for human nature to attain; it aimed rather at the infinity of actual life—good and bad alike—as the subject-matter of the poetic art. Schlegel took the general conception, in short, chiefly in the last of the five special senses which I have above distinguished. He had long since, in the days of his Graecomania, set down, among the characteristics of modern art and taste which he then so severely reprehended, a desire to reproduce in literature the "Fülle und Leben" which are the "Vorrecht der Natur," a "frightful and yet fruitless yearning to spread out to the infinite and a burning eagerness to penetrate to the very heart of the individual"; and he now incorporates in his new doctrine, as aesthetic *desiderata*, all the elements of his former damnatory definition of the modern spirit.¹¹ It was, then, this ambition for "Reichtum des Stoffes," this aspiration to match in art the abundance and diversity and complexity of Nature, that for Schlegel constituted the "infinity" of the Romantic ideal; and the actual aims and temper of Romantic poetry, as he conceived them, were, therefore, not only different from, but potentially antagonistic to, the aims and temper of "sentimental poetry" as they had been defined by Schiller.

The contrast becomes the more striking in a passage in which Schlegel reads into Schiller's term his own meaning. There is, he wrote in 1800, one particular element "in der Bedeutung des Sentimentalen, was gerade das Eigenthümliche der Tendenz der romantischen Poesie im Gegensatz der antiken begreift"—viz., its interest in actual life, and its consequent predilection "für den eigentlich historischen Stoff." "Romantic poetry rests wholly upon historical grounds." Autobiographies, "confessions," such as Rousseau's (which, Schlegel adds, are a far better *Roman* than his *Héloïse*), literary "arabesques," such as the novels of Jean Paul—these are "die einzigen romantischen Naturprodukte unsers Zeitalters." "All so-called *Romane*" should be valued "in proportion to the amount of direct personal observation (*eigne Anschauung*)

tion of the exaggeration of the "sentimental" type, he must be supposed to have forgotten some of his own distinctions. For it was scarcely from an excessive zeal in the pursuit of a moral ideal that Werther suffered.

¹¹ Cf. the writer's previous paper, *MLN.*, xxxii, pp. 67-9.

and of the representation of life which they contain; and from this point of view, even the successors of Richardson, however much they may have wandered from the right path, are welcome. We can at least learn from Cecilia Beverley how people were bored in London, when to be bored was the fashion, and how a British lady came to grief through excess of delicacy and ended by destroying herself. The oaths, the Squires, and the like, in Fielding, are, as it were, stolen from life itself, and the *Vicar of Wakefield* gives us a deep insight into the way the world looked to a country parson. . . . But how sparingly and in dribblets do these books mete out to us the little portion of reality (*das wenige Reelle*) which they contain! And how much better a *Roman* than the best of these is almost any book of travels or collection of letters or autobiography, to one who reads them in a romantic spirit!"¹² But in Schiller, this preoccupation with *das Reelle* is not the mark of the "sentimental" but of the "natural" poet. "Natural poetry has a dependence upon experience of which the sentimental knows nothing." "Die sentimentalische Dichtung ist die Geburt der Abgezogenheit und Stille, und dazu ladet sie auch ein; die naive ist das Kind des Lebens, und in das Leben führt sie auch zurück."¹³ One passage of Schiller's especially sharply manifests the contrast between his "sentimentalisch" and Schlegel's "romantisch." There are, he remarks, two ways in which poetry may have "einen unendlichen Gehalt"; and in one of these ways, even the "natural" poet may be said to aim at "infinity"—when, namely, "he represents an object *with all its limits*, when he individualizes it." What Schiller seems to mean here is that the complete representation even of a single object, with all of its concrete determinations and relations—of an object *per-*

¹² From the "Brief über den Roman" in the *Gespräch über die Poesie*, 1800; *Jugendschriften*, II, 372, 374-5. It is true that the same writing contains also a dithyrambic passage, already quoted in part, in which we are told that sentimental poetry, being concerned with "ein unendliches Wesen," does not "fix its interest only upon persons, events, situations and individual desires," but sees these only as symbols of a "higher and infinite love," etc. Schlegel, in other words, though he mainly takes the Romantic "infinite" in what I have called the realistic sense, lapses at rhetorical moments into the language more appropriate to the quasi-mystical sense. Yet even in the passage in question, he indicates that the "unendliches Wesen" that he has in mind is neither a supersensible reality nor a moral ideal; it is "die heilige Lebensfülle der bildenden Natur."

¹³ *Über naive usw.*; Schiller's *Werke*, 1847, XI, 233, 232.

fectly individualized—would be an infinite task. But not this sort of infinity, he goes on, is the task of the sentimental poet; he raises the object of his art to the infinite rather by “removing all its limitations, by idealizing it.” Thus it is precisely the sort of “infinity” which is here exemplified for Schiller by “naive Dichtung” that is exemplified for Schlegel by Romantic poetry.

Thus it was that Schiller could classify Shakespeare as a “natural,” while Schlegel classified him as a Romantic poet. The Shakespeare of the plays—and of the Shakespeare of the *Sonnets* Schiller, at least, appeared oblivious—does not unlock his heart; he does not, for the most part, represent idealized, but highly individualized, characters, “mit allen seinen Grenzen”; he does not appear to be much interested in the expression of an unattainable moral ideal; nor is he noticeably concerned about the *Veredlung* of his hearers or readers. But—as it seemed to Schlegel—he surpasses all other poets in the “universality” of his representation of life; and it is for this reason that he is the supreme representative of Romantic art.¹⁴

We may, finally, observe both the similarity and the contrast between “sentimentalisch” and “romantisch” by recalling the terms in which Schlegel defined the latter in the celebrated *Fragment 116* in the *Athenæum* (1798) in which the adjective received, so to say, its first official definition. “Romantic poetry” is, first of all, a “progressive Poesie.” It is “still in Becoming; indeed, this is its very essence, so that forever it can only *become*, and never *be*.” In this, obviously, it resembles Schiller’s “sentimental poetry.” But Romantic poetry is also “Universalpoesie”—universal, be it noted, not in the sense of universality of appeal, but in the sense of totality, or all-inclusiveness of content, an all-inclusiveness which it can ever more nearly approximate but never attain. It must not only unite in itself the several forms and *genres* of poetry, but it must also “fill and cram every art-form with every sort of solid *Bildungsstoff* and animate the whole with the play of humor. It embraces everything whatsoever that is poetic, from the greatest system of art con-

¹⁴ The notion of “subjectivity,” which is included (though through different connections of ideas) both in the conception of “sentimental” and in that of “Romantic” poetry, introduces a confusing sort of cross-cleavage here, in the thought of both Schiller and Schlegel. To analyze the relation of this notion to the other elements of the two definitions, and thereby to clear up that confusion, would unduly lengthen this paper.

taining within itself other systems, to the sigh, the kiss which the child breathes forth as it improvises an artless song. . . . It alone can become a mirror of the whole surrounding world, a picture of the age." And yet it also, more than any other, can express the reflection of the poet upon the objects which he represents. "It alone is infinite, because it alone is free; and it accepts this as its first law, that the freedom (*Willkühr*) of the poet shall suffer no law to be imposed upon it." "From the romantic standpoint," adds Schlegel in a later *Fragment*, "even the degenerate types of poetry—the eccentric and the monstrous—have their value as materials for and essays towards universality, if only there is really something in them, if they are original."¹⁵

Such was the earliest aesthetic program of Romanticism. Its characteristic feature, the demand for totality in the representation of life, had both a subjective and an objective application. On the one hand, it was a demand for adequacy, and therefore for freedom, of *self-expression* on the part of the poet; hence the Romantic *étalage du Moi*. On the other hand, it was—and, with the first of the Romantics, it was much more largely and emphatically—a demand for truth and completeness in the representation of the realities of human character and experience, in all their endless diversity; and in this aspect, the original Romantic program was the program of a genuine realism. Between these two applications of what seemed but a single idea, Schlegel does not appear to have very sharply distinguished; but there was a latent incongruity between the two which eventually became evident enough. In either of its interpretations, but especially in the second, the Romantic ideal of universality was manifestly foreign to Schiller's conception of "sentimental poetry," with its obsession with "the contrast between the real and the ideal," its lack of interest in "actual human nature," its insistence upon idealization. Nevertheless it was Schiller, as we have seen, who was chiefly, or, at all events, finally and decisively instrumental in leading Friedrich Schlegel to adopt the Romantic ideal.

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¹⁵ *Fragment* 139. Cf. also, as a foreshadowing of later realism, *Fgm.* 124: "Wenn man aus Psychologie Romane schreibt . . . so ist es sehr inkonsequent, und klein, auch die langsamste und ausführlichste Zergliederung unnatürlicher Lüste, grässlicher Marter, empörender Infamie, ekelhafter sinnlicher oder geistiger Impotenz scheuen zu wollen."